



The Sonoran Conservancy of FOUNTAIN HILLS

Newsletter #1

05/05/03

Dear Friends and Members,

It is time to provide you with an update on progress with Conservancy goals for the Preserve in Fountain Hills. As a reminder, a membership in the Sonoran Conservancy primarily provides funding to support care and protection of our McDowell Mountains within Fountain Hills. We also look to members and friends for contributions of their time and talent in accord with Conservancy programs.

The Preserve land is designated to be classed as "open space-conservation" which means no development or land disturbance. However, a trail system is needed to provide control of limited Public access and to prevent random disturbance of the open space.

Since last Fall, 35 persons participated in one or more scheduled classes on construction of secondary walking trails. Twenty three of those persons applied this instruction by volunteering one or more times to work on the first of several trails we plan to build in the Preserve.

We also profited from added training and direct participation from more than twenty five experienced trail builders who are part of a large, state wide, nonprofit group known as Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona.



Looking South toward Red Rock Mountain

This combined manpower logged over 800 hours of participation in removing vegetation, relocating mature cacti, cutting and leveling the trail bed, building crib rock retaining walls, and moving major rocks where necessary.

This first trail has been called "Town Overlook". Leaving from near the Central trailhead location and traversing the main ridge, the trail climbs about 200 feet in elevation over a distance of nearly one half mile.. At the top, you have a view of Town as well as a broader view of the Verde Valley from Bartlett Lake in the north to beyond Red Rock mountain looking southward. Our Fall program includes creating several rest areas where hikers may enjoy the views. Future plans also include a loop trail running west and north with possible connection into the County Park.

Recent plans by MCO have changed. The building of a public highway to our Central trailhead and developing home sites in the Adero Canyon were postponed. Instead, they will create Eagles Nest, the area west and north of the end of Golden Eagle Blvd. During road construction the public will be restricted from any access to either the County Park or the Preserve until after roads are completed. Meanwhile, McDowell Mountain Preservation Commission continues to work on design concepts for the Central trailhead as well as to negotiate an acceptable easement for hikers to access the mountain area.